

WHITE HOUSE
FAITH-BASED
AND
COMMUNITY
INITIATIVES

COMPASSION
IN ACTION

ROUNDTABLE

*Advancing Compassion
and Service Strategies
at the State Level*



August 29, 2008

INTRODUCTION

In January 2007, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) launched a series of monthly Compassion in Action Roundtable meetings to highlight organizations, programs and policies addressing critical social needs. The roundtables convene and facilitate discussion between policymakers, government officials, philanthropists, and faith-based and community service providers around targeted issues.

The events reveal the President's Initiative as a broad-based, community-centered reform agenda, showcase innovative projects and promising practices, and draw attention to government efforts to expand and support the work of faith-based and community organizations actively engaged in serving their neighbors and communities.

Today's event highlights compassion and service strategies advanced at the state level. The Corporation for National and Community Service has a long tradition of working constructively and effectively with many nonprofit, faith-based, and other community-based organizations to address community needs. Since President Bush launched the FBCI to strengthen the work of faith-based and small community organizations in 2001, the Corporation has expanded its efforts to engage these organizations more fully in each of their major programs. The outcomes of this effort have been notable at the state level where governors have actively sought to leverage the resources of the Corporation with their own efforts to more fully engage small faith-based and community organizations to meet the needs of citizens and communities in their respective states.

Several states have effectively combined their State Commission on Volunteerism with their Faith-Based and Community Initiative to more effectively address enormous challenges and to engage every willing partner in service to their neighbors in need. Many of these efforts have also attracted partners from other sectors and have served to strengthen communities and civil society in tangible ways.

ADVANCING COMPASSION AND SERVICE STRATEGIES AT THE STATE LEVEL

COMPASSION IN ACTION ROUNDTABLE

August 29, 2008 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

10:30 am Welcome and Introduction

Jedd Medefind, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director
White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

10:35 am Keynote Remarks

Jay Hein, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director
White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

10:50 am Federal Strategies

Mikel Herrington, Deputy Director, AmeriCorps State and National

11:00 am State Showcase Panel

Moderator:

Krista Rush Sisterhen, Special Assistant, Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
Corporation of National and Community Service

Panelists:

Susan Weddington, President
OneStar Foundation

Wendy M. Spencer, Chief Executive Officer
Florida Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Volunteer Florida

Sydney Hoffman, Director
Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Isaac Randolph, Jr., Executive Director
Indiana Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives

Q&A will follow presentations

12:00 pm Adjourn

STATE BEST PRACTICES

COMPASSION IN ACTION ROUNDTABLE

Alabama

Established in 2004, the Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) works with Federal, state, and faith-based and community entities to develop strong partnerships and networks that will better serve the public. The GFBCI outreach strategy provides capacity assessment as well as information and tools that instruct faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) on the responsibilities that accompany public funds, including the restrictions specific to faith-based organizations. In addition to general outreach, the GFBCI hosts seminars and conferences, and publishes a bi-weekly electronic newsletter geared toward small to mid-sized FBCOs.

Each program housed under the GFBCI works to broaden and deepen the reach of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in the State of Alabama. Programs including AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps VISTA, Alabama Citizen Corps, Support Annex G – Volunteer and Donations Management, and the Governor's Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness involve extensive funding and/or coordination with faith-based and community organizations.

In addition, Alabama FBCOs partner with the GFBCI to play a vital role in disaster preparedness and response through cooperation with several programs, including the Ready Alabama public preparedness campaign. Faith-based organizations comprise the majority of state and local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) membership. These organizations are critical in preparedness, response and long-term recovery. They are typically the first volunteers on the disaster scene for feeding and debris removal and the last to leave, often years later, due to home repair and rebuilding.

Because approximately 50 percent of Alabama volunteers give of their time via faith-based organizations, combining the faith-based initiative with state service commissions immediately affords a synergy of similarly

focused organizations. This pairing of efforts combines state, Federal, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) resources to address some of the most pressing social problems.

Arkansas

The Arkansas Service Commission (ASC) is a part of the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Volunteerism (DOV), and serves faith-based and community organizations by providing capacity-building, technical assistance, and additional support. The DOV is the oldest state office of volunteerism in the nation with a rich FBCO partnership history, and was designated by the Governor to lead in the implementation of FBCI in Arkansas. The ASC and DOV have capitalized on existing networks and relationships with FBCOs, and have also developed new networks and resources, including a comprehensive data base of over 4,000 FBCOs that are able to partner together with state, Federal, and local entities to address human need in Arkansas communities.

One such successful partnership is a mentoring program spearheaded by the First Baptist Church of North Little Rock. The program targeted adults who were affected by welfare reform during 2000-2003, and used the Division of Volunteerism Arkansas Mentors Program model, which successfully recruited mentors from congregations to help people transition from welfare to work. In addition to local congregations, the Arkansas Mentors Program also partnered with the AmeriCorps*VISTA program. Other strong examples of Arkansas partnerships include the Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. and Arkansas HIPYPYCorps, both of which partner with local FBCOs to provide volunteers and resources.

Florida

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) believes that "strengthening Florida's communities through volun-

teerism and service" is not just a mission statement; it's a way of life. Now, more than ever, Floridians of all ages are ready to answer the call and lend a hand in their local communities. Volunteer Florida was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youth to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism for disaster preparedness and response; and supports the Governor's initiatives through the promotion of innovative volunteer programs.

Florida is leveraging the strength of its state volunteer service commission and robust volunteer infrastructure to engage the state's faith and community-based organizations in volunteer service. Specific activities include statewide marketing and promotion of volunteerism; the establishment of county-wide Long Term Recovery Centers for the specific purpose of providing aid to nonprofits in times of disasters; leveraging AmeriCorps partnerships to address local needs; and engaging the Governor in the promotion of specific priorities for faith and community-based agencies. Highlights of Florida's work include the creation in statute of the Faith-Based and Community Advisory Council; mini-grants and technical support to faith and community-based organizations through funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Compassion Capital Fund; funding for programs like AmeriCorps Trinity Church in Miami which addresses pressing social needs for families and youth through the good work of AmeriCorps members; and its encouragement of the establishment of a faith-based volunteer center in Collier County (Naples) with committed support from six churches and one synagogue.

Indiana

In January 2005, Governor Mitch Daniels through Executive Order 05-16 created the Office of Faith-

Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) to insure that the faith-based institutions of Indiana were provided equal access to state and Federal resources and services. With the establishment of the OFBCI, the responsibilities of the Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism (ICCSV) were folded in under the auspices of this new office. Together the OFBCI with assistance from the ICCSV, provides information, training, technical assistance and limited grant funding to both community based and faith-based organizations seeking to make Indiana a better place to live for all citizens.

- Serves as the liaison between the Office of the Governor and many of Indiana's community and faith-based organizations, volunteer centers, and corporate volunteer councils.
- Coordinates OFBCI activities with those of any Federally administered service programs to ensure that services are not duplicated.
- Provides information, technical assistance, education and resource support to groups and organizations to improve and strengthen the State's volunteerism and community service infrastructure.
- Administers Corporation for National and Community Service Programs through Federal funds available under the National and Community Service Act of 1993. In that role, OFBCI and the OFBCI Board of Commissioners oversees grants in excess of \$2 million dollars annually awarded to approximately 13 AmeriCorps State programs. These programs provide individuals the opportunity to spend a year serving in Indiana communities to address problems in the areas of human needs, education, the environment and public safety. Among other things, members of AmeriCorps programs tutor children in under-served schools, assist low-income residents to find housing, and organize neighborhood watch programs to make our communities safer.

- Works closely with the Corporation for National and Community Service Indiana Office and the Indiana Department of Education, Office of Service-Learning, to connect the state's streams of national service (Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America).
- Applies for funding to the Corporation for National and Community Service and other entities that administer Federal grants to support the objectives established by OFBCI for faith-based and community-based programs.
- Promotes innovative and model programs and initiatives in order to share best practices among such groups and organizations.

In the fall of 2008 the Governor will announce the Good Works Indiana (GWIN) initiative as next step to assisting and enhancing volunteerism in Indiana. GWIN is specifically designed to strengthen the work already being done in local communities. The primary focus of GWIN is to build the capacity of medium and small local grassroots and faith-based organizations, connecting them with statewide resources and other communities and ensuring that they are prepared to be effective humanitarian aid responders during times of disaster. The premise behind Good Works Indiana is simple "...local pains are best healed with local hands."

Maryland

The Maryland Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) was established by executive order in 2004 to coordinate community and volunteer activities statewide and advise the Governor on policies to enhance and improve community programs. The GOCI also coordinates the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism, Volunteer Maryland, Cultural & Ethnic Commissions, and community affairs within the Executive Branch of Maryland government. In addition, GOCI works closely with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency on Emergency

Preparedness/Disaster Relief for the State, and serves as a liaison to the White House and Federal Centers of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

The Office mobilizes public support for volunteer service and community organizations and encourages civic participation by individuals, schools and community-related organizations. The units within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives work in a coordinated effort (along with the Governor's Intergovernmental Affairs Office) to coordinate with Federal and local governments, private sector entities, academia, and local organizations to strengthen communities, which is a priority of the Governor.

An enhanced outreach effort has educated the faith-based arena in resources available through the Office of Service and Volunteerism, and has generated interest in the many resources of the State government. GOCI and Intergovernmental Affairs have coordinated to expand their outreach to heighten and strengthen emergency preparedness/disaster relief. These outreach efforts have highlighted the many resources and priorities of the office, including monthly ethnic and cultural commission meetings, monthly conference calls, weekly municipal visits, the Governor's monthly "Capital For a Day" program, the One Marylander newsletter, and other GOCI efforts.

South Carolina

The South Carolina Faith-Based and Community Liaison operates as a State Commission as a part of United Way, enabling the use of private funding and freeing scarce state resources to be used on programs that do not have the entrepreneurial freedom of nonprofits such as United Way. United Way raises 100 percent of the necessary match dollars through our campaign to insure adequate administrative oversight of the program.

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the State of South Carolina was awarded \$1,150,994 for eligible projects, and

will use this funding to deploy 220 AmeriCorps volunteers around the state to engage in community services including Habitat for Humanity buildings and renovations, tutoring children in local schools throughout the state. In addition, all AmeriCorps volunteers are trained in various aspects of disaster preparedness through a leading faith-based provider, which will help Corps members to work with their local communities.

Targeted initiatives for next year will add additional focuses by marketing AmeriCorps in areas of the state not yet served by our Commission, seeking new and unique proposals that address other needs and underserved areas, and focusing on quality results and creating real change.

Texas

The OneStar Foundation, a supporting nonprofit of the Office of the Governor of Texas, was established by Executive Order in 2003, and manages the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, and the Texas Commission on Volunteerism. The OneStar Foundation has strengthened the social sector of Texas through organizational capability building programs; has commissioned research to learn, then share, critical data about the capacity of Texas' social sector; has planned and begun implementing as a state resource an asset map of all nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Texas; and has learned from, and worked with, national experts in developing additional approaches that address these roles for government.

The OneStar Foundation recently launched an innovative attack on Texas' public education challenges by announcing their intent to invest \$45 million of AmeriCorps*Texas funding in the success of Texas students. All AmeriCorps*Texas funding for 2009 through 2012 will focus on improving high school graduation rates, increasing students' academic performance and preparing Texas students for tomorrow's workforce.

Utah

The Utah Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, established in 2006, works with the Utah Department of Housing and Community Development and the Utah Commission on Volunteerism to partner with faith-based and community organizations. Examples of Utah "best practices" and successes cover issues including chronic homelessness, education, and economic development. Utah Governor Jon Huntsman has committed to end chronic homelessness by 2014, and received the 2008 "Home for Every American Award" for his initiative in this area. The Award is presented yearly by the Interagency Council on Homelessness to leaders who invest well in this issue. Twenty Utah AmeriCorps members have been assigned to particular homelessness initiatives, including Volunteers of America, street outreach, and other projects.

In the area of economic development, the Association for Utah Community Health utilizes AmeriCorps members to expand and enhance medical services for the medically underserved (include Navajo tribe members) in rural Utah. The AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative is an example of Utah's education focus, which includes partnerships with schools, PTAs and local organizations, and has resulted in tutoring large numbers of children for tens of thousands of hours a year, saving schools more than \$2,000,000 per year in teacher aide salaries, and raising reading scores. Another noteworthy AmeriCorps partnership in Utah involves the National Ability Center and the Utah Conservation Corps, providing work and training opportunities for disabled athletes in the areas of skiing and other winter sports.

FEDERAL EFFORTS FOR STATE STRATEGIES

Over the past seven years, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has taken root in each State and countless communities across the nation as a pragmatic way of addressing society's toughest human service needs. State- and city-led strategies have included efforts to strengthen the network of government and nonprofit organizations to improve the welfare of citizens, build the capacity of faith-based and community organizations, and address specific challenges.

The President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) has produced deep change in the Federal Government's approach to social services by providing opportunities for grassroots nonprofit organizations to collaborate with the Federal Government in both financial and other partnership forms. A "level playing field" has largely been secured to allow the full participation of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) in efforts to aid the needy. Innovative programs and pilot projects are tapping into the unique strengths of FBCOs to address issues ranging from prisoner reentry to drug addiction. However, this is only the first chapter in the story.

A second chapter is already being written in State and local governments across America, where the same quiet transformation is taking root, as well. The variety of models used to implement statewide efforts reflects the pragmatic, problem-solving nature of their respective leaders. The governors of 17 states have a faith-based and community liaison located within their office. Fourteen states have located their faith-based and community liaison within a state agency and have allocated resources through that agency to support the operation of the office and the agency's priorities. Four states have located the state faith-based liaison within non-profit organizations.

While states and cities pursue an FBCI agenda in remarkably different ways, their organizational structure and policy strategies appropriately align with the unique needs and interests of their regions. Even

in states and locales that lack formal FBCI structures, public-and private-sector leaders are advancing FBCI strategies to reform policy, launch new programs, and train nonprofit organizations to better solve social problems in their communities.

Several states have recognized the value of leveraging their FBCI with their state commission on volunteerism. These state commissions are designed to engage and support volunteers in national and community service projects and partnerships. With more Americans volunteering through religious organizations than through any other type of organization, faith-based and community initiatives are an integral part of each state's efforts to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to give back to their communities. Alabama, Florida, Indiana, and Texas have developed statewide models that have combined their FBCI and volunteer commissions to strengthen their ability to respond to their neighbors in need. From disaster preparedness, relief and recovery to prisoner re-entry and educational achievement, these states have been able to equip and engage FBCOs in significant ways.

CNS and FBCI

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) has worked closely with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and USA Freedom Corps to dramatically increase the number of FBCOs and their volunteers in AmeriCorps* VISTA. In 2004, there were 315 VISTA members serving in 78 faith-based sponsored organizations. Last year, CNS had 1,000 members serving in 828 faith-based organizations generating and supporting 600,000 community volunteers to alleviate poverty. There were 93,000 national service participants in the Gulf Coast following Katrina. Those participants supported more than 260,000 community volunteers that came to help, more than half of which were from the faith-based community.

The Corporation for National and Community Service has developed some new on-line resources at the Resource Center that's available at nationalservice.gov. The goal is to make sure that every state service commission administering AmeriCorps grants understands how to engage faith-based and community organizations and increase access to the nearly \$1 billion that CNS makes available through the states for service and service learning and technical assistance and support. In addition, CNS is hosting a special faith-based institute for state service commission leaders to equip them to contact and engage FBCOs. More information on faith-based and community resources is available from CNS at http://www.nationalservice.org/for_organizations/faith/index.asp

U.S. Agency for International Development

International voluntary service has been a source of national strength since the earliest days of the United States. The confluence of efforts of individual American volunteers, voluntary organizations, private enterprise, and government has been a distinctly American contribution to world stability and development.

Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP)

In 2003, President Bush announced the creation of Volunteers for Prosperity, a new volunteer-based initiative designed to support major U.S. development initiatives overseas. VfP links highly skilled American professionals with U.S. organizations that have international volunteer opportunities. These organizations place the volunteers in shorter, more flexible assignments than the Peace Corps model, making service a possibility for more Americans. VfP works closely with the USAID Center for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives to promote volunteerism with civil society organizations including faith and community based NGOs.

President Bush launched the Volunteers for Prosperity initiative to help Americans with skills in such areas as health care, information technology, financial services,

trade and investment, education, and agricultural development, answer the call to service and help meet global needs. In addition, Federal grant applicants who rely on skilled volunteers are more competitive for federal funds.

Coordinated and administered by the Office of Volunteers for Prosperity at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), VfP works with major U.S. development initiatives in countries abroad to seek ways to expand and enhance volunteer service opportunities for international development activities. Volunteers for Prosperity helps to match doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, economists, computer specialists, and others with U.S. organizations working on specific U.S. development initiatives such as:

- African Global Competitiveness Initiative
- Water for the Poor Initiative
- Digital Freedom Initiative
- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- Middle East Partnership Initiative
- Millennium Challenge Account
- President's Malaria Initiative

Examples of VfP opportunities include: (1) An information technology professional from Florida could spend two weeks in Peru training small businesses to use computer applications effectively, and (2) A doctor in Pennsylvania who wants to volunteer for three months to help HIV/AIDS patients in Uganda can contact Volunteers for Prosperity and be matched with a medical organization that is working in Uganda and needs highly skilled volunteers.

Volunteers for Prosperity supports a new model of private-public cooperation in foreign assistance. Organizations representing a wide range previously not involved in official foreign assistance - including smaller faith-based and community groups, trade asso-

ciations, and corporations - are joining to help highly skilled American volunteers answer the President's call to service.

After completing tours of service in Volunteers for Prosperity, skilled Americans can qualify for public recognition of their contributions through the President's Volunteer Service Award.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.volunteersforprosperity.gov/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes the important role that faith-based and community organizations play in helping us to better serve populations in need. Through our partnership and grant opportunities, USDA welcomes faith-based and community groups as important partners in our domestic food and nutrition, international food aid, and rural development programs.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service administers 15 domestic nutrition assistance programs that work together to improve food security, fight hunger, and support healthy eating for low-income people across the Nation. These programs reach one in five Americans over the course of a year.

FNS's food and nutrition programs operate primarily through partnerships with State agencies, which in turn partner with local organizations. Generally, FBCOs participate in these programs through agreements with States, or through other local agencies that have agreements with States, rather than directly with the Federal government. For example:

- Commodities provided by FNS' Emergency Food Assistance Program help the Simple House Family Assistance Center provide food to over 500 households per year. This partnership was facilitated by the Kansas Department of Social Rehabilitation Services.

- With the help of an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Joycliff Community Lifelong Resource Center received over \$3000 in Federal support to provide lunch to at-risk youth through the Summer Food Service Program.
- The Montana Department of Public and Human Services, which administers FNS' Child and Adult Care Food Program, partnered with the St. Labre Indian School Child Care Center to provide nutritious meals for approximately 25 children, providing nearly \$8,000 in Federal support.

Recently, FNS created an online toolkit to help its State administering agencies learn more about how to strengthen and expand partnerships with faith-based and community organizations. Please visit www.fns.usda.gov/fns/fbco/tool-kit.htm to learn more.

Volunteers play a critical part in ensuring the success of food and nutrition programs. Volunteers can supervise summer feeding sites, help with educational and other activities in afterschool programs, transport meals to elderly food bank clients, and assist low-income individuals in applying for Food Stamp benefits.

Recognizing the importance of volunteers and their work alongside USDA, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer recently created the Fight Hunger Initiative, an effort to engage all citizens in the fight against hunger in communities across America. The USDA's new online toolkit offers a step-by-step guide on how to help neighbors in need, from volunteering at a food drive to planting community gardens. The toolkit includes additional resources to help you learn more about USDA food and nutrition programs.

For more information, please visit: www.usda.gov/fbci.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. Each year, HHS administers more grant dollars than all other Federal agencies combined—distributing 60 percent of all federal dollars awarded. With programs covering a wide spectrum of activities, there are many opportunities for States and local governments, faith-based and community organizations, and individual volunteers to partner with HHS.

For more information on HHS, visit www.hhs.gov/fbci.

The Medical Reserve Corps

The mission of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is to improve the health and safety of communities across the country by organizing and utilizing public health, medical and other volunteers. The MRC was founded after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. It is a partner program with Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. Citizen Corps, along with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps are part of the President's USA Freedom Corps, which promotes volunteerism and service nationwide.

MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists. Many community members—interpreters, chaplains, office workers, legal advisors, and others—can fill key support positions.

For more information visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training, and Utilizing Volunteers: A Guide for Faith- and Community-Based Service Providers

This guidebook produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is designed for community groups and faith-based organizations seeking to maximize the skills of their volunteers, expand their services to the community, and enhance their effectiveness. The principles described in the handbook can be applied to any field and should help organizations understand how to implement and manage a successful volunteer program.

To download this guidance, please visit: www.samhsa.gov/FBCI/Volunteer_handbook.pdf

U.S. Department of Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) works with state and local workforce systems to strengthen their capacity to partner with faith-based and community non-profits that are helping Americans overcome barriers to employment, find good jobs, and stay employed.

For example, DOL CFBCI is helping ten state workforce agencies and more than 50 local workforce areas create "Access Points" to workforce system services for jobseekers at places of worship, community centers, libraries, and other neighborhood locations. DOL will expand this successful project to at least 20 additional cities or states over the next 12 to 18 months. You can find more information about "SHARE Network Access Points" at www.dol.gov/cfbci/accesspoints.htm.

DOL CFBCI is also hosting 19 "Build Your Community Network" events in 16 states to encourage state and local workforce systems, employers, and faith-based and community non-profits to foster partnerships that address common employment-related goals, like increasing job placements, strengthening supportive

services, improving employee retention, or expanding the available labor pool.

Finally, DOL CFBCI is working with the Council of State Governments (CSG) to promote innovative prisoner reentry strategies for state elected officials and policy makers. This collaboration has two parts. First, CSG has developed a “reinvestment blueprint” to help state lawmakers reinvest corrections funding into community-based employment solutions for ex-offenders. Second, CSG will develop a prisoner reentry policy guide, website, and technical assistance to increase collaboration between state governments and faith-based and community non-profits that provide reentry services.

For more information, please visit: www.dol.gov/cfbci

U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs

FBCI=VetSuccess Program

VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service (VR&E) is partnering with faith-based and community organizations (FBCO) to provide service-connected disabled veterans opportunities to seek employment, career advancement, job mobility, family economic well-being, and greater financial security. Through the FBCI=VetSuccess pilot, opportunities for employment and supportive services are being provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities. The state strategy that VR&E program has implemented is a national partnership with FBCOs to demonstrate the effectiveness of government and FBCOs working together to deliver employment opportunities and supportive services to service-connected disabled veterans at the state level.

FBCI=VetSuccess has program sites in the following states: Montgomery AL, Seattle WA, Detroit MI, St. Louis MO, Atlanta GA, Indianapolis IN, St. Petersburg FL, Oakland CA

Although, this pilot has program sites in only eight states, VA is located in every state and FBCOs can

participate by identifying service connected disabled veterans within their organization and community that are unemployed or under-employed or may need supportive services and inform them about this initiative and who to contact to obtain additional information. Additionally, FBCOs are invited to contact VR&E to discuss how they can become involved in a similar partnership.

As a result of these FBCOs partnerships, VA has significantly increased the number of veterans with service-connected disabilities entering suitable employment—from 362 in FY 2005 to 673 in FY 2007.

For more information, please visit: www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm

BIOGRAPHIES

COMPASSION IN ACTION ROUNDTABLE

■ JAY HEIN

*Deputy Assistant to the President and Director
White House Office of Faith-Based and Community
Initiatives*

Jay F. Hein was named Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on August 3, 2006. In this role, Mr. Hein works to implement President Bush's compassion agenda by engaging public-private partnerships with faith- and community-based social service organizations across the U.S. and around the globe.

Prior to his position at the White House, Mr. Hein was the founding president of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, an international public policy research firm headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. In this capacity, he directed the Institute's research portfolio focusing on a range of community-based policies such as welfare-to-work, access to postsecondary education, affordable health care, and crime prevention.

Mr. Hein also served as vice president and chief executive officer of the Foundation for American Renewal, established by Ambassador Daniel R. Coats to provide financial grants and other support to community-based organizations while educating the general public on effective compassion principles and practices.

Previously, Mr. Hein was executive director of Civil Society Programs at Hudson Institute, which included the organization's Welfare Policy Center, its Faith in Communities Initiative, and programs centered around community-based healthcare reform. Mr. Hein also served as director of Hudson's field office in Madison, Wisconsin, where he conducted hands-on research and analysis in support of the State's welfare reforms. He also served in the Wisconsin State government as a policy director, where he helped design and implement Wisconsin's ground-breaking welfare replacement program.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Hein worked in a range of leadership roles within Illinois State government, including the Illinois Department of Public Aid; Illinois Secretary of State's Office; and Illinois State Library, where he contributed to the initial planning of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Mr. Hein received a B.A. from Eureka College, where he was an inaugural member of the Ronald W. Reagan Fellowship program, and earned a Master's degree in Political Studies at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

■ MIKEL HERRINGTON

*Deputy Director
AmeriCorps State and National*

Mikel Herrington has worked in community service organizations for many years. He began his service by volunteering two years teaching English and administering an English language program in China. He then served with the Palmetto Project, a statewide nonprofit organization in South Carolina that addressed issues in health care for the working poor, race relations, and youth service. Mikel worked on the Healthy Schools initiative at the South Carolina Department of Education before joining the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) as Southeastern Director of Projects and Training. While with NCCC, Mikel led a team that annually trained over two hundred AmeriCorps members and developed hundreds of community service projects across a twelve state region, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. Mikel moved to Washington to become the national Director of Operations for NCCC, during which time he dedicated three months to coordinating the Corporation's immediate response to hurricane Katrina. For the last two years, Mikel has served as Deputy Director for AmeriCorps State and National. His portfolio includes the 52 state and territory service commissions that fund hundreds of AmeriCorps programs supporting

thousands of members throughout the country. Mikel is a graduate of Yale College and has a Masters degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

■ SYDNEY HOFFMAN

Director

Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

As a member of Governor Bob Riley's Senior Staff, Sydney Hoffman serves as Director of The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI). She has been tasked with continued implementation of the Faith-Based Initiative for the State of Alabama within an office that combines the Faith-Based Initiative and existing citizen service programs such as AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps. Governor Riley's innovative approach has been acknowledged by the White House as a model for other states, while Alabama AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps have been recognized nationally and internationally, respectively.

Currently Sydney serves as Chair of the Governor's Faith-Based Advisory Board, Chair of the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness, Vice Chair of the Alabama Citizen Corps Council and member of the Alabama Homeland Security Task Force. She was Governor Riley's 2007 nominee to the National Governor's Association for "Citizen of the Year" based on her leadership and innovation in training Alabama's citizens to prepare, prevent, and respond to any natural or man-made disaster. Additionally, Ms. Hoffman has been selected to attend the prestigious Naval Post Graduate School (NPS) Center for Homeland Defense & Security. Her attendance will mark the first time a proponent has been selected with an exclusive background in citizen preparedness.

Ms. Hoffman is one of the primary architects of Alabama's citizen preparedness initiative which is imple-

mented via a multifaceted approach through the Ready Alabama campaign (www.ReadyAlabama.org). This campaign is recognized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as a template and promising practice for citizen preparedness. Sydney oversees the administration of the program through partnerships with state and local governments as well as nongovernmental entities such as businesses and faith and community-based organizations. Alabama's Be Ready Camp, one facet of the Ready Alabama campaign, is an example of that determined effort to prepare now and also build a foundation for the future. It is through these efforts that Ready Alabama has become a tool which is examined and implemented by various agencies and governments across the country.

Sydney's previous experience includes leading the Alabama Citizen Corps Program, a citizen preparedness initiative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, for the GFBCI. As Director of Citizen Corps, she managed all Homeland Security and Emergency Management community initiatives and served as the liaison to the Alabama Department of Homeland Security and Alabama Emergency Management Agency. Sydney also served as the Volunteer and Donations Coordinator for Alabama during Hurricane Katrina and has an accomplished record of volunteer recruitment, management, and team building in both private and public organizations.

Her interest in citizen service began when she observed that the most effective and lasting change usually began at the grassroots level by people directly impacted by their work. Sydney believes the most effective way to meet critical local, state and national needs is to partner government, private, and nonprofit resources with individuals and groups at the local level since local stakeholders have the ability to craft solutions uniquely tailored to their community.

■ **ISAAC RANDOLPH, JR.**

Executive Director

Indiana Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives

Isaac E. (Ike) Randolph Jr., is a 22-year veteran firefighter with the Indianapolis Fire Department, certified in the areas of arson/fire investigator, emergency rescue scuba diver and advanced emergency medical technician. During his tenure with the department he received several commendations for exemplary service including Medals of Bravery and Merit, and the American Red Cross Hall of Fame. Randolph's parallel career as a community leader includes; founder and Executive Director of the St. Florian Center a youth summer leadership camp, policy advisor for faith-based initiatives to Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. From 2003-07 Randolph served on the Indianapolis City-County Council the legislative body for the City of Indianapolis. He currently resides in Indianapolis with his wife Regina, and daughters Nia, and Sydney.

■ **KRISTA RUSH SISTERHEN**

Special Assistant, Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Corporation of National and Community Service

Krista Rush Sisterhen has been privileged to support the development and strengthening of faith-based and community initiatives at the municipal, state and national level for more than 15 years. Krista served as Social Policy Advisor to Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith where she was responsible for introducing competition and performance-based contracting to the purchase and delivery of social services and for developing and implementing comprehensive faith-based and community-based initiatives to address urgent social and public health issues including community-wide efforts to strengthen families and reduce homelessness.

From 2003-2007, Krista served as the Director of the Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives where she developed and implemented a number of major initiatives including the Ohio Compassion Capital Project which invested more than \$1 million per year in training, technical assistance and small grants to develop the capacity of small organizations to serve their neighbors in need and the Ohio Strengthening Families Initiative which invested \$11 million per year in direct service grants to strengthen and support vulnerable families. Currently, Krista is the Special Assistant for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the Corporation of National and Community Service charged with strengthening FBCI networks at the state and local level to advance social welfare priorities through effective collaborations with highly leveraged volunteer opportunities. She has a BA in Political Science from the University of Kansas and a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Kansas. Krista is married to Tom Sisterhen and has two daughters, Kristin and Kalli.

■ **WENDY M. SPENCER**

Chief Executive Officer

Florida Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Wendy M. Spencer is Chief Executive Officer of the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, commonly called Volunteer Florida. Volunteer Florida administers Florida's AmeriCorps Programs; coordinates volunteers and donations statewide during times of disaster; and assists in developing Florida's network of volunteer centers. As CEO of Volunteer Florida, Wendy manages more than \$18 million a year in federal, state, and local grants that engage citizens in volunteer activities. Wendy's 24-year career includes serving as Director of the Florida State Park Service, where she managed 1,700 full- and part-time employees and more than 5,000

volunteers for 158 award-winning state parks. She also served as Resource Development Director for the United Way of the Big Bend from 1991–2001. Wendy has raised more than \$35 million to benefit communities and has volunteered on countless boards of charitable organizations. She currently serves on the boards of the Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action and the Association of State Service Commissions. She also is a graduate of the XXIV Class of Leadership Florida, an organization that develops a strong, diverse statewide network of leaders with a shared commitment to make Florida a better place to live. Wendy was appointed in early 2006 by President Bush to serve on the President's Council for Service and Civic Participation. Wendy is married to Ron Spencer and has two sons, Parker and Boyd.

In announcing her appointment, Governor Perry said that Weddington will be "a tremendous leader in the volunteer community. Susan is hard working, driven, and determined to make a difference for all Texans, regardless of race, creed, ethnicity or political affiliation."

Weddington resides with her husband, Bob, in San Antonio. They have a son and two grandchildren.

■ SUSAN WEDDINGTON

President

OneStar Foundation

Susan Weddington has given the better part of her adult life in service to others. Governor Rick Perry recognized Weddington's commitment to volunteerism by appointing her President of the OneStar Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the impact and effectiveness of Texas civil society through greater promotion and support of volunteerism, stronger collaborations and partnerships, and healthier non-profit organizations.

Since becoming President in 2003, Susan has laid out a vision of ensuring that the strength of the capacity of our state's social service nonprofit sector to respond to need is as strong as its compassion to serve. She has led OneStar to develop and make available tools and resources that will help organizations with their mission to work for safety, security and renewal of our Texas communities.